



THE
INBESTIGATORS
RESOURCE



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ABOUT THE SERIES

Ezra, Ava and Kyle are excited to meet the new girl in their class, especially after they discover that Maudie is no ordinary new girl. She's a 10-year-old puzzle prodigy with odd social skills and freaky powers of observation. When Maudie outwits a thief on her first day at school, Ezra conjures a bold plan: they should all start a detective agency.

Calling themselves the Inbestigators, these four disparate kids set up shop in the granny flat in Ezra's back yard and find that with Maudie's intellect, Ezra's tech savvy, Ava's people skills and Kyle's unbridled enthusiasm, they are soon solving one thorny mystery after another. Over the months they meet an eclectic array of clients – dancers, scientists, shop owners – and successfully retrieve missing turtles, recover stolen assignments, and work out why all the neighbourhood car alarms have stopped working. They also meet an eclectic array of

culprits. Discovering how someone carried out a crime is interesting – but discovering why they did it is more interesting. Maudie, Ezra, Ava and Kyle are surprised that normal feelings they sometimes have, like loneliness or anxiety or jealousy, are most often the reason a person commits a crime. Determining the motive is not only the key to finding the culprit but also the key to understanding how other people think and feel.

Maudie, Ezra, Ava and Kyle record their adventures in a weekly vlog and it's apparent that they take their job very seriously: there's a lot at stake when people are counting on you to help them. It's also apparent that, although fighting crime isn't easy when you have to finish your homework first, being an Inbestigator is awesome. Not only are these Grade Five detectives making the world a safer place, they are having the best time doing it.

USING THIS RESOURCE

The mystery genre is so engaging partly because it positions readers as active participants in solving a crime. They put themselves in the detectives' shoes and collect clues alongside them, paying close attention to what the detective thinks, sees, does, and says.

Learning tasks in this resource will help Year 3-6 students to better comprehend the mystery genre, teaching them to read and think like a detective. Tasks also build the knowledge and skills necessary for students to craft their own engaging mystery stories.

Lessons can be approached individually or incorporated into a longer unit on the mystery genre. Learning tasks in

The Inbestigators Teaching Toolkit are aligned to version 9 of the Australian Curriculum, with links made to English, Critical and Creative Thinking, and Personal and Social Capability.

Series 1 and 2 of *The Inbestigators* are available to purchase in the ACTF Shop.





LEARNING TASKS

TASK 1: MYSTERY VOCABULARY

Watch: *The Case of the Curious New Girl* | Full episode

Ask the class 'What is a mystery story?' and record students' responses on an anchor chart. Encourage discussion about their favourite mystery series and common elements in the stories. Students can refer to this chart in subsequent classes.

Explain to students that there is vocabulary specific to the mystery genre. Learning these words will help them to better understand mysteries like *The Inbestigators*, and to write their own engaging 'whodunnit' stories. Split the class into groups and allocate

several of the following words to each group. Have groups collaboratively compose definitions for each of their words, consulting dictionaries if necessary. Coming back together, ask students to share their definitions with the wider class. Was it easy or challenging to collaboratively define the words? Students' definitions can be refined if necessary, and then recorded on an anchor chart titled 'Mystery Vocabulary'.

Mystery Vocabulary: alibi, clue, culprit, detective, evidence, motive, mystery, red herring, sleuth, suspect, victim, witness.

If time permits (or in a subsequent lesson), watch 'The Case of the Curious New Girl'. Ask students to identify the mystery, the victims, clues, the suspects and their motives, and the culprit as they become apparent. This process could be repeated in modelled, shared or independent reading of mystery stories.



Australian Curriculum Links

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ENGLISH				
Language for expressing and developing ideas	AC9E3LA10	AC9E4LA11	AC9E5LA08	AC9E6LA08
Language for interacting with others	AC9E3LY02	AC9E4LY02	AC9E5LY02	AC9E6LY02
GENERAL CAPABILITIES				
Critical and Creative Thinking	Identify, process and evaluate information			
Personal and Social Capability	Communication			



LEARNING TASKS

TASK 2: OBJECTIVE LANGUAGE

Watch: The Case of the Curious New Girl | 11:20 – 14:56

Maudie’s demeanor and language change when she begins investigating the theft of Ava’s fundraising money. Recording responses in her detective notebook, Maudie asks for everyone’s recollections about what they did, said, saw and thought that morning. She confirms details by asking clarifying questions, repeats key information, and remains neutral in her recount of events. Maudie’s objective language is so unexpected in a classroom context that Kyle asks, ‘Is she the police?’

As a whole class, discuss the differences between subjective and objective language. When is it appropriate to remain objective (like Maudie in an investigation), and when is it more appropriate to share

feelings and opinions? Why is objective language important when reporting the facts of a case?

Ask students to apply this knowledge by independently writing two short recounts of the same event for the school newsletter. One version should be written subjectively, incorporating the student’s personal responses to the event, and descriptive and figurative language. The other version should be written objectively: a factual report, neutral tone, and no personal responses. Pairs of completed recounts could be read to the class to further illustrate the differences between subjective and objective language.

Australian Curriculum Links

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ENGLISH				
Language for interacting with others	AC9E3LA02	AC9E4LA02	AC9E5LA02	AC9E6LA02
Creating texts	AC9E3LY06	AC9E4LY06	AC9E5LY06	AC9E6LY06
GENERAL CAPABILITIES				
Critical and Creative Thinking	Create possibilities			
Personal and Social Capability	Perseverance and adaptability			

LEARNING TASKS

TASK 3: NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Watch: The Case of the Spoiled Sports Day | Full episode

Kyle loses his temper when he is defeated in the 100-metre running race – typically his strongest event – at the school sports carnival. Recounting the day’s events for his video blog, Ezra narrates this episode. The information he includes (and excludes) shapes the perspective that viewers will experience – and the clues they have access to.

In a class discussion, ask students if there were other narrators in the episode. Did their perspectives provide viewers with different information? How would this have changed the audience’s engagement with the characters? For example, Kyle speaks directly to the camera about the events, and Ezra’s sister Poppy shares moral judgements about good citizenship and sportsmanship.

Additional prompts for small group or class discussions about narrative perspective include:

- Could this mystery story be told without a detective’s perspective? What impact would that have on suspense?
- The four Inbestigators are in the same red ‘house’ team. How might the events from sports day – and the retelling of those events – differ if the detectives weren’t on the same team?

- Poppy is interested in aspects of the story that Ezra finds irrelevant, such as Ava and Pixie’s handclap. Drawing on your prior knowledge of Poppy, which events or details might she elaborate on if she was the main narrator? How would her vocabulary differ to Ezra’s?

To further demonstrate how narrative perspective shapes the audience’s experience, model writing a short piece from Ethan’s point of view. Include his possible thoughts, actions and motivation to create a compelling alternative narrative. For example, perhaps Ethan is frustrated about losing the 100-metre sprint to Kyle for the past five years of primary school. He didn’t start the day intending to cheat, but seized an unexpected opportunity when Mrs. Parides asked him to measure the track.

In subsequent lessons, the class could collaboratively write a short piece from an alternative narrative viewpoint. Students could then attempt the task independently.



Australian Curriculum Links

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ENGLISH				
Language for interacting with others	AC9E3LA01	AC9E4LA01	AC9E5LA01	AC9E6LA01
Interacting with others	AC9E3LY02	AC9E4LY02	AC9E5LY02	AC9E6LY02
GENERAL CAPABILITIES				
Critical and Creative Thinking	Create possibilities			
Personal and Social Capability	Empathy			

LEARNING TASKS

TASK 4: CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Read aloud the following character description for Maudie, which was written by the series creators:

Maudie is different. It's not just the way she wears boots instead of school shoes and has short hair instead of the regulation grade-five-girl-ponytail and, in fact, doesn't even seem to care what she looks like. It's the way she talks.

Everything Maudie says is clever, insightful, and gets straight to the point. She kinds of sounds like a grownup - just not a very polite grown up. Maudie's a bit rude; not intentionally, she just doesn't adhere to the same social rules that everybody else does. But it's not just the way she talks that makes Maudie different. It's the way she listens.

Maudie is an incredible listener. She takes in everything everyone says and then, to make sure she will remember, she writes it down in a little notebook. It makes her

seem a little like the police.

What makes her seem even more like the police is the way she asks probing questions, the way she notices every single detail about people, and, of course, the way she catches criminals.

Maudie's idiosyncrasies haven't earned her a mountain of friends - or any friends, until now.

As a class, discuss the content and language features that make this an engaging character description. For example, the text describes both Maudie's physical appearance and her behaviours, and includes repetition, similes, and sentence variation. What inferences can readers make about Maudie based on this description? To better understand character development and the composition of character descriptions, undertake one of more of the following tasks:

- Provide students with a copy of Maudie's character description, then have them work in pairs to identify and highlight the personal qualities that make Maudie such an effective sleuth.



- With reference to Maudie's character description, have pairs of students collaboratively compose a similarly descriptive piece for another Investigator: Ava, Ezra or Kyle. Encourage students to incorporate some of the features discussed earlier, such as sentence variation and similes. Share student work and reflect.
- Watch clips from *The Investigators* to identify instances of behaviours referred to in the students' character descriptions. Students could then reflect on the accuracy of their descriptions, and possible areas for improvement.

Australian Curriculum Links

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ENGLISH				
Examining literature	AC9E3LE03	AC9E4LE03	AC9E5LE03	AC9E6LE03
Creating literature	AC9E3LE05	AC9E4LE05	AC9E5LE05	AC9E6LE05
GENERAL CAPABILITIES				
Critical and Creative Thinking	Evaluate actions and outcomes			
Personal and Social Capability	Collaboration			



LEARNING TASKS

TASK 5: CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Watch: The Case of the Very Lost Notebook | 12:33 – 14:36

This episode reveals more about Maudie’s backstory and her inner world. The audience learns that her lost notebook is so cherished partly because of the photos it contains: a young Maudie with her mum, taken shortly before her mum passed away. In a moment of insight, Ava wonders whether the lost photos had heightened Maudie’s fear of losing the memory of her mum.

In their three-step advice for creating compelling characters (link in Additional Resources), authors Nova Weetman and Emily Gale recommend starting with a list of the new character’s fears and wants. Knowing a character’s inner thoughts – such as Maudie’s fear of forgetting her mum – makes it easier to know how they will react to events in the story.

Working in pairs, ask students to begin developing a character that could join Ezra, Maudie, Kyle and Ava at The Inbestigators Detective Agency. They should start by listing five things the character fears and five things they want. Brainstorming fears that are not easy for the character to avoid, and wants/goals that are not easy to achieve, will help students achieve tension in their future stories.

If time permits, students could further develop their characters by documenting their back story (including family, friends, interests, and settings), physical appearance, mannerisms and speech.

Australian Curriculum Links

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ENGLISH				
Creating literature	AC9E3LE05	AC9E4LE05	AC9E5LE05	AC9E6LE05
Analysing, interpreting and evaluating	AC9E3LY03	AC9E4LY03	AC9E5LY03	AC9E6LY03
GENERAL CAPABILITIES				
Critical and Creative Thinking	Create possibilities			
Personal and Social Capability	Collaboration			

LEARNING TASKS

TASK 6: AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

Watch: The Case of the Peculiar Pop Quiz | 04:50 – 06:06

Authors of mysteries entertain their readers by creating a puzzle for them to solve. They reveal pieces of the puzzle slowly to build suspense, keeping readers interested until the big reveal at the end. Attempting to solve the puzzle before the detective does is exciting for readers, and a feeling of resolution is created when the mystery is eventually solved.

In a class discussion, ask students what they already know about audience and purpose for the mystery genre. Record their initial thoughts on an anchor chart and continue to add to the chart throughout the lesson / unit.

Play the opening credits of *The Inbestigators*. Ask students if this sequence reveals anything about the series' intended audience and purpose, and what has informed their thinking. Based on the characters and setting depicted, who would most enjoy this show? Does the familiarity of the school setting make students feel connected to the story? Ezra sees something

shocking on his laptop and races to tell the others; what impact is the running and whispering intended to have on the audience? What response is the music intended to invoke?

When the class has agreed on the intended audience and purpose of the series, explain that – like detectives – they will now look for evidence to support their thinking. They will carefully observe a short *Inbestigators* clip, looking for examples of visual and language features that are used to meet the purpose of the text. They will also record how the clip makes them feel, as this sheds light on the author's intentions.

Have students draw a three-column chart, and label it with 'What I see', 'What I hear', 'What I feel'. Firstly, play the above clip once for students' enjoyment. Then play the clip a further three times, giving students an explicit focus on each occasion (see, hear, or feel). Potential evidence for each column includes:

SEE	HEAR	FEEL
Settings	Dialogue (content, tone, pace, rhythm, emphasis)	Suspicious
Characters (age, appearance, behaviour, relationships)	Music	Tense
Facial expressions and body language	Sound effects	Excited
Mood	Silence	Curious
Colour		Interested
Speed of movements		Confident
Viewpoint		
Transitions		
Framing		



Ask volunteers to share their notes with the class, then discuss what these examples reveal about audience and purpose. Were there any common responses? Do these examples confirm or challenge students' initial thoughts about the intended audience and purpose?

Australian Curriculum Links

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ENGLISH				
Examining literature	AC9E3LE03	AC9E4LE03	AC9E5LE03	AC9E6LE03
Interacting with others	AC9E3LY02	AC9E4LY02	AC9E5LY02	AC9E6LY02
GENERAL CAPABILITIES				
Critical and Creative Thinking	Think about thinking (metacognition)			
Personal and Social Capability	Communication			

LEARNING TASKS

TASK 7: ASKING QUESTIONS

Watch: The Case of the Tricky Trimathlon | Full episode

The mystery genre is so engaging partly because it positions readers as active participants in solving a crime. They put themselves in the detectives' shoes and collect clues alongside them, paying close attention to what the detective thinks, sees, does, and says. Like the *Inbestigators*, readers need to ask themselves questions as characters are introduced and events unfold in order to identify possible suspects, motives and clues.

Explain to students that they will watch a clip from *The Inbestigators*, and their goal is to be aware of their thinking while viewing. What are they noticing as they watch? What questions are they asking themselves? Students can jot down thoughts while viewing if they like.

Play the first 10 minutes of 'The Case of the Tricky Trimathlon', and then pause the episode for discussion. Ask students to briefly 'turn and talk' with a partner about their own thinking.

What questions have they asked so far, and what observations have they made? Has the mystery been revealed yet? Are there any suspects or motives at this point?

Watch the remaining six minutes of the episode, asking students to continue focussing on their thinking. After viewing, allow time for students to write down any additional thoughts, and then discuss their findings as a class.

Were there any frequently asked questions? Were any questions particularly helpful in identifying suspects, motives or clues? Record students' responses on an anchor chart titled 'Thinking like a detective', explaining that asking themselves questions while reading and viewing mysteries will improve their comprehension – and perhaps help them solve the crime before the detectives!

Suggested questions for the anchor chart include:

CHARACTERS	SETTING	EVENTS
Who is the detective?	Where does the story take place?	What has happened so far?
Who is the victim?	When does the story take place?	What is the mystery?
Who are the suspects, and do they have motives?	Why is the setting important?	Are there any clues?
Which suspects have alibis?	What is the scene of the crime?	Have any events been foreshadowed by the narrator?
Are there any witnesses?		
Are there any red herrings?		
Who are the main characters and secondary characters?		
What do I know about each character? Why is this important?		

Australian Curriculum Links

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ENGLISH				
Language for interacting with others	AC9E3LA01	AC9E4LA01	AC9E5LA01	AC9E6LA01
Interacting with others	AC9E3LY02	AC9E4LY02	AC9E5LY02	AC9E6LY02
GENERAL CAPABILITIES				
Critical and Creative Thinking	Create possibilities			
Personal and Social Capability	Empathy			





LEARNING TASKS

TASK 8: MAKING INFERENCES

Watch: The Case of the Burgled Bags | Various clips

In a whole class introduction, remind students that authors don't always explain things literally: readers need to piece together clues – like detectives – to understand the unfolding story. Readers combine their prior knowledge (or schema) and clues from the text

to make inferences, enabling them to better understand the author's meaning. Emphasise that inferences are conclusions about what is happening 'now' in a text, unlike predictions about what will happen 'next'. Play the following clip to illustrate this process.

EXAMPLE 1:

00:25 – 01:34

In this scene, Kyle explains that he didn't like school at first. Ava is shocked by this statement, as Kyle loves school now. She infers Kyle's reasons for disliking school by combining this new information with her prior knowledge about him. Ask students if they can infer the thoughts of any other characters in this scene.

The following two scenes provide opportunities for students to practice inferring. For each example, play the clip, provide time for thinking and writing, then share students' thinking. This process can illustrate that there can be more than one correct inference. After sharing, ask students to reflect on how good their thinking was, and if they may need to change their thinking.

Reproduce the following table for students or have them recreate it in their reading journals.

EXAMPLE 2:

05:27 – 07:36

Sadie accuses Gary of stealing her bag. There were no other people around, so who else could have committed the crime?

EXAMPLE 3:

09:35 – 10:49

Learning that Gary hadn't taken his dog Barney to the beach that morning, Maudie is now certain that Gary didn't steal Sadie's bag: Barney did. Maudie makes inferences about how Barney would have gotten the bag, but where is the bag now?

	MY INFERENCE	CLUES FROM THE TEXT	PRIOR KNOWLEDGE / SCHEMA
CLIP 1			
CLIP 2			

Australian Curriculum Links

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ENGLISH				
Interacting with others	AC9E3LY02	AC9E4LY02	AC9E5LY02	AC9E6LY02
Analysing, interpreting and evaluating	AC9E3LY05	AC9E4LY05	AC9E5LY05	AC9E6LY05
GENERAL CAPABILITIES				
Critical and Creative Thinking	Transfer knowledge			
Personal and Social Capability	Personal awareness			

LEARNING TASKS

TASK 9: CREATING INFERENCES

Watch: The Case of the Incredible Fortune Teller | 00:39 – 03:10

Writing a mystery story is like designing a puzzle for readers. Authors must reveal information (or clues) slowly to create interest and build suspense. The challenge is knowing how much information to reveal, and how and when to reveal it.

Play the above clip, asking students to pay attention to what viewers learn about Ramona, how they learnt it, and in what order. Her name, appearance, year level, demeanor and her motivation for being on Ava's committee are revealed slowly, sustaining viewers' interest throughout the scene. These clues about Ramona's character (and her significance in the story) are revealed partly through her actions and dialogue.

To practise leaving clues for readers, challenge students to create inferences

in their own imaginative writing. Ask students to 'show, not tell' their readers information. They can reveal characters' traits through their actions and dialogue, for example, and settings and events can be explored through characters' reactions.

Have students select one of the following prompts for an independent writing task, or create your own prompts as a class:

- Write about a very intelligent detective without saying they are smart.
- Write about someone acting suspiciously without saying they are acting suspiciously.
- Write about a scary place without saying that it is scary.

Australian Curriculum Links

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ENGLISH				
Examining literature	AC9E3LE03	AC9E4LE03	AC9E5LE03	AC9E6LE04
Creating literature	AC9E3LE05	AC9E4LE05	AC9E5LE05	AC9E6LE05
GENERAL CAPABILITIES				
Critical and Creative Thinking	Consider alternatives			
Personal and Social Capability	Perseverance and adaptability			



*Fic tecusam inus, sed iense quia voluptu
scitas p'edi, esse sequis ratio electi ad
etus corerum re quiana genissim in
pili que.*

LEARNING TASKS

TASK 10: EXAMINING PLOT

Watch: The Case of the Unhappy Camper | Full episode

A well-paced plot is key in mysteries. Students may find it helpful to think about the plot as creating a mountain shape.

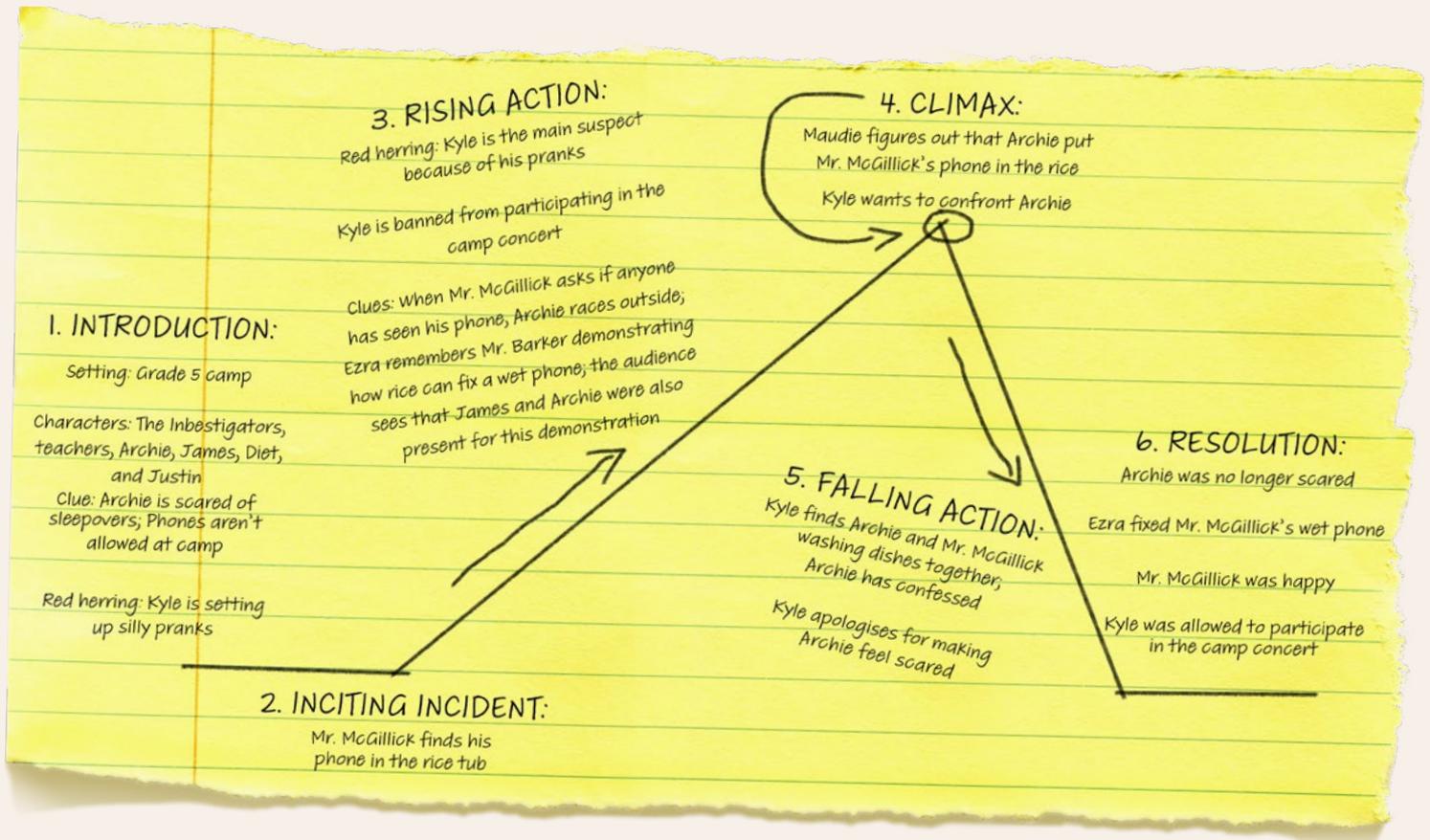
The introduction (or exposition) establishes the setting and the main characters. The inciting incident reveals the mystery that needs solving. A series of events and clues (and possibly red herrings) then build rising action: this is where the audience learns more about the main character and their relationships with other characters. At the climax (the peak of the 'mountain'), the main character makes an important decision or takes decisive action. In the falling action, the main character deals with the outcomes of their actions, and the detective recaps what they learnt. The resolution provides closure, revealing the outcomes for main characters and answering readers' questions.

Discuss the typical mystery plot with students, drawing a mountain shape on the whiteboard or an anchor chart to help illustrate the structure. Explain that the class will now watch 'The Case of the Unhappy Camper', with the goal of identifying the action at different plot points. Split students into six groups before viewing and allocate a specific plot point to each group. Groups should sit together, carefully observing and noting the unfolding events during their stage.

After viewing, provide discussion time so that students in each group can compare notes. Then ask students to share their examples, and plot these on the mountain shape drawn earlier. Ask the class if they have any further examples to contribute, then discuss. (Suggested inclusions for each plot point are provided here.)

Australian Curriculum Links

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ENGLISH				
Examining literature	AC9E3LE03	AC9E4LE03	AC9E5LE03	AC9E6LE03
Analysing, interpreting and evaluating	AC9E3LY03	AC9E4LY03	AC9E5LY03	AC9E6LY03
GENERAL CAPABILITIES				
Critical and Creative Thinking	Identify, process and evaluate information			
Personal and Social Capability	Collaborate			



Students could use repeat this process in subsequent lessons to analyse the plots of additional texts, either independently or in pairs. They could then use the mountain strategy to create plots for their own mystery stories. Using familiar characters and settings from *The Investigators* initially will scaffold students' learning and enable them to focus on plot. Knowledge and skills gained in earlier tasks (vocabulary, objective language, narrative perspective, character description and development, and creating inferences) can be applied when students eventually draft their stories.

EPISODE SYNOPSES

Series 1

EPISODE 1: THE CASE OF THE CURIOUS NEW GIRL

When Maudie solves a playground robbery on her first day at school, she and new friends Ezra, Ava and Kyle create The Inbestigators Detective Agency.

EPISODE 2: THE CASE OF THE DISAPPEARING DELIVERIES

When Sophie's online shopping parcels are delivered but never received, she hires the Inbestigators to track them down.

EPISODE 3: THE CASE OF THE MISSING SOLAR SYSTEM

Pixie is horrified when her space diorama goes missing and Miss Tan falsely accuses her of not doing her homework.

EPISODE 4: THE CASE OF THE DISTRESSED DANCER

When his dance troupe's concert routine is sabotaged, Zac hires the Inbestigators to find out who at the dance academy is responsible.

EPISODE 5: THE CASE OF THE SLEEPOVER SECRET

Pixie is furious when something she privately told Ava is made public, so Maudie resolves to find out how Pixie's secret got out.

EPISODE 6: THE CASE OF THE BIG MOUTH CHALLENGE

When Ben mounts a competition to see who can fit a very large biscuit in their mouth like he can, Maudie is suspicious.

EPISODE 7: THE CASE OF THE PESTERING PRANK CALLER

When a prank caller targets Ezra and his neighbours, Maudie believes the Inbestigators can track down who is making the mystery calls.

EPISODE 8: THE CASE OF THE SPOILED SPORTS DAY

At the sports carnival, Kyle loses his temper when he doesn't win a race, but Maudie suspects there might be more to Kyle's unexpected loss.

EPISODE 9: THE CASE OF THE EXCITING EXCURSION

The Grade Five rock climbing excursion is jeopardised when the permission slips go missing, but Maudie suspects they may have been hidden on purpose.

EPISODE 10: THE CASE OF THE VERY LOST NOTEBOOK

When Maudie loses her beloved notebook Ezra, Ava and Kyle band together to reunite their friend with her most prized possession.

EPISODE 11: THE CASE OF THE SUSPECT SPRINKLER

When the timer on Mrs. Maniaci's sprinkler system is tampered with before the 'Garden of the Year' competition, the Inbestigators must track down the culprit.

EPISODE 12: THE CASE OF THE PECULIAR POP QUIZ

Maudie and Ava infiltrate Mr. Barker's grade six class to watch his famous pop quiz, where Maudie uncovers a crime.

EPISODE 13: THE CASE OF THE SCIENCE SABOTAGE

When Annie's science fair experiment is stolen, the Inbestigators must track it down before the judging commences.

EPISODE 14: THE CASE OF THE WRECKED REHEARSAL

When Esther is injured in the dress rehearsal of the Grade Five play, Maudie must figure out who caused the mishap before showtime.

EPISODE 15: THE CASE OF THE PERPLEXING PAINTING

When Esther's painting is damaged during the Art Show, Maudie has trouble proving who ruined the artwork without finding the evidence first.

EPISODE 16: THE CASE OF THE TURTLE THIEF

When a turtle is stolen from Ryan's back yard, Ezra offers the agency's services, but Maudie is convinced something about the robbery doesn't add up.

EPISODE 17: THE CASE OF THE MISPLACED MUG

Mr. McGillick is upset after he loses his precious 'World's Best Principal' mug so Ezra makes it his personal mission to get it back.

EPISODE 18: THE CASE OF THE SAD LITTLE SISTER

Poppy loses her school hat and is forced to sit in the shelter shed, where Maudie discovers there may be more to the missing hat.

EPISODE 19: THE CASE OF THE DISORIENTED DRONE

After a little girl's drone is blown away, the Inbestigators must prove that a boy in a neighbouring house has claimed it as his own.

EPISODE 20: THE CASE OF THE BAFFLING BIRTHDAY

Ava wants to give Maudie her first proper birthday party, but Maudie gets sidetracked by a mystery.



EPISODE SYNOPSES

Series 2

EPISODE 1: THE CASE OF THE CONCERT CATASTROPHE

Maudie is crushed when her tickets to a pop concert go missing, especially since it seems likely that she herself has misplaced them.

EPISODE 2: THE CASE OF THE SOCCER SAGA

Kyle asks Maudie and Ava to make a video of his soccer match, but Maudie discovers something about the game is not quite right.

EPISODE 3: THE CASE OF THE PUZZLING PET DAY

When the Animal Shelter visits school to audition kids for a television commercial, Maudie suspects a crime is happening right under everyone's noses.

EPISODE 4: THE CASE OF THE COPYCAT

Ava is selected to deliver a speech at the town hall, but when she is accused of stealing it, Maudie must prove her innocence.

EPISODE 5: THE CASE OF THE ROSEMARY RIDDLE

Ezra is grumpy when his visiting Nanna interrupts his detective work until she unexpectedly gives the Inbestigators a case to crack.

EPISODE 6: THE CASE OF THE ROBOT ROBBERY

On Science and Technology dress-up day, Patrick is upset when his robot costume is stolen by an unidentified mad professor.

EPISODE 7: THE CASE OF THE VANISHING KOALAS

Kakow Koalas are the latest snack sensation sweeping the playground and Mario is hungry for justice when his are stolen.

EPISODE 8: THE CASE OF THE EXTREMELY EMPTY FREEZER

Ava plans a birthday party to cheer up a lovesick Mr. Barker, but things go wrong when his birthday cake goes missing during the celebrations.

EPISODE 9: THE CASE OF THE MIRACULOUS MINI GOLFER

Convinced a customer is cheating to claim a prize, Charlie hires the Inbestigators to help save his job at the Mini Golf Park.

EPISODE 10: THE CASE OF THE PROBLEMATIC PARTY

The Inbestigators promise to help when Toby's birthday invitation to five friends is mysteriously copied and distributed to the entire class.

EPISODE 11: THE CASE OF THE LOUSY LUNCH ORDERS

Ezra is outraged when everyone's treat day lunch orders are replaced with healthy food. He insists on tracking down the culprit.

EPISODE 12: THE CASE OF THE INTERRUPTING INTERN

Maudie is upset when Ezra, Ava and Kyle promote their new intern to an Inbestigator after he surprisingly solves a case before Maudie.

EPISODE 13: THE CASE OF THE FREAKY FREQUENCY

When the ice-cream shop loses business because customers can't lock their cars, the Inbestigators must uncover why all the car keys in the area have stopped working.

EPISODE 14: THE CASE OF THE TRICKY TRIMATHLON

After he accidentally signs up for the Trimathlon, Kyle surprises everyone by doing well, until he mysteriously can't find his cheat sheet.

EPISODE 15: THE CASE OF THE BURGLIED BAGS

When Gary, the school's lollipop man, is accused of stealing bags from parents' cars, Kyle is devastated and determined to clear his name.

EPISODE 16: THE CASE OF THE DISTRACTED DETECTIVE

Ezra is nominated for the Young Small Business Awards but as the event draws near, Ezra is increasingly upset, and Maudie must find out why.

EPISODE 17: THE CASE OF THE FISHY FUNDRAISER

Amelia resents her fundraising cupcake stall being upstaged by a lemonade stall, so when things go sour, Amelia is accused of sabotage.

EPISODE 18: THE CASE OF THE INCREDIBLE FORTUNE TELLER

Ezra and Ava's friendship is tested when Ramona's fortune telling predictions come between them during the Coins for a Cure fundraiser.

EPISODE 19: THE CASE OF THE UNHAPPY CAMPER

When Mr. McGillick's phone goes missing at the Grade Five camp, Kyle is accused of hiding it as part of a prank.

EPISODE 20: THE CASE OF THE TRIPLE INBESTIGATION

While on the hunt for Ezra's missing goldfish, Maudie uncovers two more puzzling mysteries to be solved.





BEHIND-THE-SCENES

WITH CREATORS ROBYN BUTLER AND WAYNE HOPE

From the outset, we knew that *The Inbestigators* would be Gristmill's biggest production to date: we were creating a brand new show, with kids, a mystery, and we were making forty of them.

The casting process was immense. Nathan Lloyd Casting saw over eight hundred children in order for us to find our four (perfect) leads and our classroom semi-regulars. We auditioned our eventual core cast several times, keen to know whether

they had not just the talent, but the wherewithal, confidence - and desire - to make the distance.

There is no quick way to shoot forty episodes. Gristmill comedies are snappy; we like our scenes to be fast, which means every 15-minute episode times out at a 24-page script. Multiply 24 by 40... well, basically you're looking at shooting almost 10 pages a day - for five months. We began filming in winter, on a two-degree frosty morning. We were still shooting in a November heatwave. Stamina and tenacity were incredibly important tools in making this show - not just for our children, but for our crew.

The long production was challenging in its own right, but it was working within the parameters of the children's hours that called for absolute resilience. While our productions operate on a ten-hour day, our kids were on a strict eight hours, with a ten-minute break every hour. Not 'getting the day' was not an option, so every single day required intense focus and determination from the crew.

Trying to still shoot ten hours a day - as well as factoring in the children's tutoring - meant we were constantly staggering starts, juggling the schedule and moving locations. We had to be flexible and light on our feet and, not surprisingly, we became extremely adept at using our time cleverly. Our Heads of Department were amazing at rallying their teams and, although we were often exhausted, the mood always remained happy, warm, and fun on set. Our adult actors were also remarkable in their ability to work in often harried conditions with patience and kindness. We had specifically cast our four semi-

regular teachers not only because of their ability and comic skill but also for their temperament; their generous attitude was a continual delight.

We had planned to build a studio set for our Detective Agency, so that when winter daylight ran out (at four o'clock in Melbourne!!) we could keep working inside, in an environment we could control. We found a space in our Port Melbourne production office for the build, but once we found our wonderful hero school in Moorabbin, we realised the travel time back and forth would be untenable. We knew the only solution was to have the set on the school grounds. Unfortunately, there was no space on the school grounds. With literally no alternative, we came up with a daring solution: to build the set on the staff car park and house it in a semi-permanent marquee. This required us to make a new temporary car park for the staff (we razed a disused playground area), hire a marquee that met all our specifications (we hired an audio engineer to soundproof it from the eight-laned Nepean Highway), and most importantly, convince our crew that

we weren't stark raving mad. Happily, the plan worked, and our studio set became our much-loved home away from home.

A different crime and culprit in every story translates to a new set of characters and often a new location every episode, so we were regularly on the move. Again, factoring in the labor laws, we made sure all our locations were within a five kilometre radius of our school and set so we could easily get back and forth. We were constantly amazed at how quickly the entire circus was able to re-locate. We also tried to cast 15-year olds as often as possible in guest roles, so we weren't restricted by their hours!

Over the year, we endured every usual frustration of school life: headlice, stomach aches, squabbles, twisted ankles, tears. We also experienced the joys: birthdays, bat mitzvahs, ballet concerts and football finals. We were like a huge, messy and wonderful family because, as we discovered, it's impossible to make a show like *The Inbestigators* and not feel like a family at the other end.





ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Create a Character with Nova and Emily: Authors Emily Gale and Nova Weetman give young writers tips for creating engaging characters.

https://emilyandnova.weebly.com/?fbclid=IwAR2d1th7NQBfeZYD23giP6pSN_tGTwesYJzkxMZtubONYR1gg1dbgbM_v1M

***The Inbestigators* Q & A Cast Webinar:** Cast members from *The Inbestigators* joined the ACTF in a live virtual learning event for students.

<https://youtu.be/WauK8vcsPkQ>

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Directed by ROBYN BUTLER, WAYNE HOPE, IAN REISER, TIM BARTLEY and NINA BUXTON

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GRISTMILL / NETFLIX



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THE
INVESTIGATORS